



Substitute House Bill No. 7240

Public Act No. 07-160

***AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS
COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE STATE'S WELFARE REFORM
INITIATIVE.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 17b-112 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2007*):

(a) The Department of Social Services shall administer a temporary family assistance program under which cash assistance shall be provided to eligible families in accordance with the temporary assistance for needy families program, established pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The Commissioner of Social Services may operate portions of the temporary family assistance program as a solely state-funded program, separate from the federal temporary assistance for needy families program, if the commissioner determines that doing so will enable the state to avoid fiscal penalties under the temporary assistance for needy families program. Families receiving assistance under the solely state-funded portion of the temporary family assistance program shall be subject to the same conditions of eligibility

Substitute House Bill No. 7240

as those receiving assistance under the federal temporary assistance for needy families program. Under the temporary family assistance program, benefits shall be provided to a family for not longer than twenty-one months, except as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of this section. For the purpose of calculating said twenty-one-month time limit, months of assistance received on and after January 1, 1996, pursuant to time limits under the aid to families with dependent children program, shall be included. For purposes of this section, "family" means one or more individuals who apply for or receive assistance together under the temporary family assistance program. If the commissioner determines that federal law allows individuals not otherwise in an eligible covered group for the temporary family assistance program to become covered, such family may also, at the discretion of the commissioner, be composed of (1) a pregnant woman, or (2) a parent, both parents or other caretaker relative and at least one child who is under the age of eighteen, or who is under the age of nineteen and a full-time student in a secondary school or its equivalent. A caretaker relative shall be related to the child or children by blood, marriage or adoption or shall be the legal guardian of such a child or pursuing legal proceedings necessary to achieve guardianship. If the commissioner elects to allow state eligibility consistent with any change in federal law, the commissioner may administratively transfer any qualifying family cases under the cash assistance portion of the state-administered general assistance program to the temporary family assistance program without regard to usual eligibility and enrollment procedures. If such families become an ineligible coverage group under the federal law, the commissioner shall administratively transfer such families back to the cash assistance portion of the state-administered general assistance program without regard to usual eligibility and enrollment procedures to the degree that such families are eligible for the state program.

Sec. 2. Section 17b-112e of the general statutes is repealed and the

Substitute House Bill No. 7240

following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2007*):

(a) The Department of Social Services shall provide safety net services for certain families [no longer receiving benefits or] identified as having significant barriers to employment and families who are at risk of losing benefits under the temporary family assistance program or no longer receiving program benefits. Such families shall include those: (1) Identified as having significant barriers to employment during the initial assessment by the department's eligibility worker or during the first twelve months of employment services by an employment services case manager; (2) who have made a good faith effort to seek and maintain employment but have not been able to do so or who are at risk of failing to complete the employment services program; (3) who have exhausted their eligibility for temporary family assistance program benefits; and (4) who are not eligible for six-month extensions of temporary family assistance benefits due to: [(1)] (A) The receipt of two sanctions from the department during the first twenty months of the twenty-one-month time limit of said temporary family assistance program; or [(2)] (B) the determination by the department that such a family has not made a good-faith effort to seek and maintain employment.

(b) Said safety net shall consist of services provided through the existing community service delivery network with additional resources provided by the Department of Social Services. Services shall be provided in-kind or through vendor or voucher payment. Services may include the following: (1) Food, shelter, clothing and employment assistance; (2) eviction prevention; (3) an in-depth family needs assessment; (4) intensive case management that includes visits to the family's home; [(4)] (5) continuous monitoring for child abuse or neglect; and [(5)] (6) for families at risk of losing benefits under the temporary family assistance program, individual performance contracts [that shall be] administered by the Labor Department [and]

Substitute House Bill No. 7240

that require job training, job searching, volunteer work, participation in parenting programs or counseling or any other requirements deemed necessary by the Labor Commissioner.

(c) Families successfully meeting the program requirements established by the individual performance contracts in subdivision [(5)] (6) of subsection (b) of this section prior to the end of the twenty-one-month time limit shall be considered to have made a good faith effort to comply with the requirements of the program for the purposes of qualifying for a six-month extension, provided they have made a good faith effort to comply with the individual performance contract or have not incurred a sanction subsequent to completing the individual performance contract.

(d) The Commissioner of Social Services shall implement policies and procedures necessary for the purposes of this section while in the process of adopting such policies and procedures in regulation form, provided the commissioner prints notice of intention to adopt the regulations in the Connecticut Law Journal within twenty days of implementing such policies and procedures. Policies and procedures implemented pursuant to this subsection shall be valid until the time final regulations are effective.

Sec. 3. Section 17b-698 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2007*):

The [Commissioner of Social Services] Labor Commissioner shall collect data from each job training and placement service funded by the [Department of Social Services] Labor Department and serving recipients of the temporary family assistance program for the purpose of assessing the success of job placement services in assisting a recipient of either such program to attain self-sufficiency. Data collected shall include, but not be limited to: (1) The number of clients served; (2) the number of clients placed in jobs; (3) types of job training

Substitute House Bill No. 7240

received by recipients and if such training led to employment; (4) cost-effectiveness of job training; (5) types of jobs obtained by recipients; (6) salary and benefits of those jobs obtained; and (7) length of those jobs obtained.

Sec. 4. Subsection (a) of section 31-254 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2007*):

(a) Each employer, whether or not otherwise subject to this chapter, shall keep accurate records of employment as defined in subsection (a) of section 31-222, containing such information as the administrator may by regulation prescribe in order to effectuate the purposes of this chapter. Such records shall be open to, and available for, inspection and copying by the administrator or his authorized representatives at any reasonable time and as often as may be necessary. The administrator may require from any employer, whether or not otherwise subject to this chapter, any sworn or unsworn reports with respect to persons employed by him which are necessary for the effective administration of this chapter. [Information thus] Except as provided in subsection (g) of this section, information obtained shall not be published or be open to public inspection, other than to public employees in the performance of their public duties, in any manner revealing the employee's or the employer's identity, but any claimant at a hearing before a commissioner shall be supplied with information from such records to the extent necessary for the proper presentation of his claim. Any employee of the administrator, or any other public employee, who violates any provision of this section shall be fined not more than two hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than six months or both and shall be dismissed from the service. Reports or records which have been required by the administrator and which have been used in computing benefit rights of claimants or in the determination of the amounts and rates of contributions shall be

Substitute House Bill No. 7240

preserved by the administrator for a period of at least four years. Those records or reports required by the administrator which have not been used for the purpose of computing benefit rights or in the determination of the amounts or rates of contributions shall be preserved by the administrator for at least two and one-half years. Such records or reports may, after preservation for the minimum period required by this section, be destroyed by the administrator in his discretion, notwithstanding the provisions of section 11-8a. Notwithstanding any of the disclosure provisions of this chapter, the administrator shall provide upon request of the public agency administering the TANF and child support programs, any information in his possession relating to individuals: (1) Who are receiving, have received, or have applied for unemployment insurance; (2) the amount of benefits being received; (3) the current home address of such individuals; [] and (4) whether any offer of work has been refused and, if so, a description of the job and the terms, conditions, and rate of pay therefor. Notwithstanding any of the disclosure provisions of this chapter, the administrator shall provide, upon request of the Connecticut Student Loan Foundation, its officers or employees, any information in his possession relating to the current residence address or place of employment of any individual who has been determined by the Connecticut Student Loan Foundation to be in default on his student loan. Reimbursement for the cost of furnishing this information shall be made by the agency requesting the data in a manner prescribed by the administrator of this chapter.

Sec. 5. Section 31-254 of the general statutes is amended by adding subsection (g) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2007*):

(NEW) (g) (1) Notwithstanding any of the information disclosure provisions of this section, the administrator shall disclose information obtained pursuant to subsection (a) of this section to a regional workforce development board, established pursuant to section 31-3k,

Substitute House Bill No. 7240

to the extent necessary for the effective administration of the federal Trade Adjustment Assistance Program of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended from time to time, the federal Workforce Investment Act, as amended from time to time, and the state employment services program established pursuant to section 17b-688c for recipients of temporary family assistance, provided a regional workforce development board, enters into a written agreement with the administrator, pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection, concerning protection of the confidentiality of such information prior to the receipt of any such information.

(2) The written agreement shall contain safeguards as are necessary to protect the confidentiality of the information being disclosed, including, but not limited to a:

(A) Statement from the regional workforce development board of the purposes for the requested information and the specific use intended for the information;

(B) Statement from the regional workforce development board that the disclosed information shall only be used for such purposes as are permitted by this subsection and consistent with the written agreement;

(C) Requirement that the regional workforce development board store the disclosed information in a location that is physically secure from access by unauthorized persons;

(D) Requirement that the regional workforce development board store and process the disclosed information maintained in an electronic format in such a way that ensures that unauthorized persons cannot obtain the information by any means;

(E) Requirement that the regional workforce development board establish safeguards to ensure that only authorized persons, including

Substitute House Bill No. 7240

any authorized agent of the board, are permitted access to disclosed information stored in computer systems;

(F) Requirement that the regional workforce development board enter into a written agreement, that has been approved by the administrator, with any authorized agent of the board, which agreement shall contain the requisite safeguards contained in the written agreement between the board and the administrator;

(G) Requirement that the regional workforce development board instruct all persons having access to the disclosed information about the sanctions specified in this section, and further require each employee of such board, and any agent of such board, authorized to review such information, to sign an acknowledgment that he or she has been advised of such sanctions;

(H) Statement that redisclosure of confidential information is prohibited, except with the written approval of the administrator;

(I) Requirement that the regional workforce development board dispose of information disclosed or obtained under this subsection, including any copies of such information made by the board, after the purpose for which the information is disclosed has been served, either by returning the information to the administrator, or by verifying to the administrator that the information has been destroyed;

(J) Statement that the regional workforce development board shall permit representatives of the administrator to conduct periodic audits, including on-site inspections, for the purpose of reviewing such board's adherence to the confidentiality and security provisions of the written agreement; and

(K) Statement that the regional workforce development board shall reimburse the administrator for all costs incurred by the administrator in making the requested information available and in conducting

Substitute House Bill No. 7240

periodic audits of the board's procedures in safeguarding the information.

(3) Any employee or agent of a regional workforce development board who discloses any confidential information in violation of this section and the written agreement, entered into pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection, shall be fined not more than two hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than six months, or both, and shall be prohibited from any further access to confidential information.

Approved June 29, 2007